



Brownfields Initiatives in Region 3

Office of Outreach and Special Projects (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Currently, there are a number of Regionally funded Brownfields-related activities, such as targeted site assessments in urban areas, financial support of State voluntary cleanup programs, financial support of State regulation development, Inter-governmental Personnel Assignments (IPA) to cities, and outreach activities. Some of these activities are in the form of Regional or National pilots, while others are smaller scale actions such as prospective purchaser agreements. This fact sheet is one in a series of ten which outline Brownfields-related activities occurring in each of the ten Regions.

OVERVIEW

Region 3 is undertaking various pilot and research activities to address brownfields in its jurisdiction. Region 3 is:

- Funding two Regional demonstration pilots (at \$200,000) for redeveloping abandoned or underutilized lands in the cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania;
- Performing site evaluations at brownfields; and
- Investigating sources of funding brownfields redevelopment.

Demonstration Pilots

Philadelphia received a two-year cooperative agreement on May 1, 1995, to address its brownfields problems. Most areas of this mature city are utilized for industrial, commercial, residential, institutional, or infrastructure purposes, with 9.6 percent used for parks and open space. The City's industrial employment base has experienced a tremendous loss due to the decrease in manufacturing jobs (down

to 87,000 jobs in 1989 from 350,000 after World War II), and many former manufacturing plants lie abandoned. Philadelphia's Brownfields pilot will help identify the actual and potential hazards at these properties to return the abandoned plants to productive use.

Pittsburgh received a two-year cooperative agreement on February 14, 1995, to address its brownfields concerns. Pittsburgh's industrial base has experienced economic loss due primarily to the closing of the steel mills and related metals industries. Many of these sites now lie vacant and abandoned. There are no interested buyers who are willing to invest in the properties due to the unknown extent of environmental hazards and liability and costs associated with addressing these problems. Pittsburgh's Brownfields pilot will help redevelop the city's abandoned industrial plants and yield local economic benefits.

In November 1994, EPA selected the City of Richmond for a Brownfields pilot. The City of Richmond Office of Economic Development has focused on Brownfields economic redevelopment for several years and has already generated business interest in using or developing sites in targeted areas of the city. The objective of the Federal support

of the city's Brownfields pilot project is to serve as a catalyst in moving the process of reclaiming vacant business sites forward.

In July 1995, EPA selected the Town of Cape Charles/County of Northampton and the City of Baltimore for Brownfields pilots. The goal of the Town of Cape Charles/County of Northampton Brownfields effort is to facilitate the development of the Port of Cape Charles Sustainable Technologies Industrial Park as a means of creating sustainable economic development while protecting the community's unique, natural, cultural, and historic resources. Specifically, the pilot will assess the extent of contamination in the 55-acre former dump and railyard site and design a remediation strategy. The goal of Baltimore's Brownfields pilot is to encourage economic growth and redevelopment in urban areas while continuing to provide appropriate and sufficient protection of the environment.

Site Evaluations

Region 3 has agreed to perform site assessments for up to 12 brownfields within the 9-county Southwestern Pennsylvania Growth Alliance. Because of the many resources needed for a State or municipality to identify and hire a contractor under EPA's cooperative agreement regulations, EPA can perform the work faster and less expensively using its contractors. Allegheny County is compiling a list of sites for EPA assessment; two sites have been identified to date.

The Region also intends to integrate RCRA's corrective action program into its Brownfields efforts. It plans to generate a "NCAPs/Brownfields List" comprised of sites common to both brownfields priorities and RCRA corrective action priorities. From that list, the Region will determine which sites are eligible for deferral from the NPL so that they can be prioritized for assessments.

Sources of Funding

Region 3 is investigating alternate sources of funding for Brownfields activities. For instance, it is clarifying the use of State PA/SI cooperative agreements to address brownfields. Because some brownfields can be considered pre-remedial sites that therefore require initial assessments, States may enter into PA/SI cooperative agreements to perform PA/SI work on brownfields.

The Region also is investigating other sources of Brownfields funding. Recognizing that enhancement of State and local capacity is key to achieving the overall goal of brownfields assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment, the Region is studying the feasibility of using funding from other EPA-related programs, including Core, RCRA, and UST/LUST.

LIABILITY ISSUES

Region 3 is planning a series of activities to address liability issues. Based on EPA Headquarters' issuance of its revised policies, it intends to issue prospective purchaser agreements to parties interested in contaminated or potentially contaminated properties. Additionally, it is contemplating the use of comfort letters or other assurances to new owners of former NPL sites.

The Region is convening a Roundtable of Regional Experts to address brownfields environmental and redevelopment concerns. The Roundtable's first project involves working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to address environmental and liability issues associated with a dam project near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Specifically, the COE must ensure that excavated materials from the dam project are clean before it disposes the materials, and EPA must give its assurance that the COE will be shielded from future Superfund liability.

PARTNERSHIPS

Region 3 is working closely with State and local governments in the cleanup of brownfields. Examples of the Region's activities include:

- Encouraging States to develop strong voluntary cleanup programs;
- Determining the status and capabilities of State brownfields/greenfields economic redevelopment programs;
- Conducting a State and local government summit for sharing and communicating redevelopment strategies and developing networks between States, cities, and the Federal government; and

- Coordinating with States to verify the status of sites archived from CERCLIS.

The Region is participating in EPA's partnerships with other key stakeholders to gain their input and advice on its Brownfields Action Agenda. It is involved in EPA's coordination with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Economic Development Agency, and is assisting in the identification of other Federal funding sources for cleanup, economic development, job training, and other elements of EPA's national Brownfields Initiative.

Region 3 is investigating the feasibility of assigning a staff member to a State or municipality, by Inter-governmental Personnel Assignment (IPA), to help develop local Brownfields programs. Also, it is supporting and developing an "intellectual infrastructure" of universities and colleges in the Region that are studying brownfields. Specifically, the Region is exploring the establishment of an additional Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at the University of Maryland to help bridge the gap between the growing costs of environmental protection and the resources available to States and municipalities to pay those costs.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND TRAINING

Region 3 intends to undertake a series of activities to communicate its brownfields program, such as:

- Conducting inreach activities for Region 3 employees to address brownfields inquiries appropriately;
- Conducting an outreach campaign to inform and educate local citizens and community groups on brownfields policies and issues, such as government officials, residents of impacted communities, and grassroots environmental justice activists;
- Opening a dialogue with the financial community and developers so that informed decisions can be made with respect to redeveloping brownfields; and

- Working with the Hazardous Materials Training and Research institute, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, and the U.S. Department of Labor to assist in the development of job training and development activities linked to the Brownfields Initiative.

CONTACT

Tom Stolle
U.S. EPA – Region 3
(215) 597-1166



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency (5101)
Washington, DC 20460

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